

Dempsey was also a devoted family man. He is survived by his lovely wife, Linda, and his daughter Nikki.

Mr. Speaker, Mammoth Lakes has experienced many great changes over the decades that Tom Dempsey lived there. In fact, he seemed to be at the heart of them all. He truly was one of Mammoth Lakes' founding fathers. I join with his family, friends, and community in noting that he will be sorely missed.

May you rest in peace, Tom.

GENETIC NONDISCRIMINATION IN HEALTH INSURANCE AND EMPLOYMENT ACT

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2001

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise to announce the reintroduction of the Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act.

Yesterday, scientific and scholarly articles were published that explored the implications of the mapping of the human genome. Their conclusions were nothing short of awe-inspiring. The human genome map is going to allow us to explore and better understand not only human health and disease, but the very development of our species. It has tremendous promise to allow us to conquer some of the most feared diseases known to humanity and perhaps to manipulate our very destiny. It is a story of our present, past, and future.

The Romans had a famous saying: *Scientia est potentia*. Knowledge is power. From *scientia* we derive the English word *science*. Like any kind of power, however, the scientific knowledge we are gaining about our genetic composition can be used for both positive and negative ends. If used wisely, it could be a tool for health and healing that shapes the very future of our race. If used foolishly, however, it could become a weapon to undermine individuals' futures, create further divisions among groups of people, and tear at the very fabric of our nation.

Over five years ago, I introduced the first legislation in Congress to ban genetic discrimination in health insurance. Since that time, science has rocketed ahead at a speed no one predicted, even within the genetics community. Social policy, however, has not kept pace. Congress addressed the use of genetic information in passing through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, but this law covered only some cases of health insurance discrimination. A comprehensive law is needed to protect Americans against the misuse of their genetic information.

For that reason, I am introducing the Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act of 2001. I am pleased to be joined by my distinguished colleague, Representative CONSTANCE MORELLA, who represents the National Institutes of Health and has a long record of achievement and advocacy in the health care arena, and 150 bipartisan cosponsors. In the Senate, identical legislation is being introduced by Minority Leader TOM DASCHLE and Senators EDWARD KENNEDY, CHRISTOPHER DODD, and TOM HARKIN, as well as a long list of other distinguished Senators.

The events of the past few days have illustrated the urgent need for this legislation all too well. In addition to the events concerning the mapping of the human genome, we have learned that Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway performed genetic tests on employees without their knowledge or consent. The tests were conducted with the goal of identifying a predisposition for carpal tunnel syndrome and thereby undermining those employees' claims of job-related injuries. Unfortunately, this was not the first case of such genetic testing and potential discrimination. From the 1960s until 1993, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory secretly tested black employees for sickle cell anemia, until workers filed a lawsuit that resulted in a 1998 decision by the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals that this practice was unconstitutional. During the late 1990s, a study conducted by Northwestern National Life Insurance found that, by the year 2000, 15 percent of employers planned to check the genetic status of prospective employees and dependents before making employment offers. Last year, the American Management Association's survey of medical testing in the workplace found that 3% of responding employers admitted they tested employees for breast and/or colon cancer, 1% tested for sickle cell anemia, and a handful tested for Huntington's Disease. Moreover, 18% collected family medical histories, and about 5% stated that they use this information in making decisions about hiring, firing, and reassignment.

This legislation would prevent employers from using predictive genetic information to make employment decisions. It would further prevent employers from requesting or requiring that workers disclose genetic information or take a genetic test. Finally, employers are barred from disclosing genetic information without prior written informed consent.

The Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act would also address discrimination in health coverage based on genetic information. Too many Americans are deciding not to take a genetic test because they are afraid the information could be used by their insurer to deny them coverage or raise their rates to unaffordable levels. Vital medical decisions like these should be made based on solid science and personal reflection, not the fear of insurance discrimination. This legislation would prohibit insurers from requesting or requiring that an individual disclose genetic information. It would prevent health insurance companies from using this information to deny, cancel, refuse to renew, or change the terms or conditions of coverage. Finally, it would protect the privacy of genetic information by forbidding insurers from disclosing it to outside parties without prior written informed consent.

Simply having a given gene almost never means that a person will definitely develop a condition. Furthermore, every human being has between 5 and 50 genetic mutations that predispose him or her to disease. No one should lose their insurance coverage or their job based on the fact that she might develop cancer or some other disorder in 10, 20, or 30 years.

Genetic science has the potential to transform human health and open entirely new frontiers. We must safeguard the future of this research by ensuring that genetic information cannot be abused. Americans will not continue to support genetic science if they believe the knowledge gained will be used against them.

We can protect the future of genetic research and secure the rights of all Americans by passing the Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that Congress passes this responsible, comprehensive genetic nondiscrimination and privacy law.

ON PRIME MINISTER CHRÉTIEN'S SPEECH TO THE OAS

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2001

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues the address delivered recently by Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien before a special session of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States. The speech outlined his vision for the upcoming Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, specifically how the nations of the hemisphere can "move ahead on an agenda of human progress and shared prosperity" to create "La Gran Familia of the Americas." These ideas are likely to serve as the guideposts for the bilateral and multilateral relationships evolving throughout the Americas, and I urge all of my colleagues to take the time to read the following speech.

ADDRESS TO A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES—FEBRUARY 5, 2001

The first address by a Canadian Prime Minister to the Organization of American States is an important milestone in the embrace by Canada of our hemispheric identity.

A path marked by our decision to join the OAS in 1990. By our presence at the first two Summits of the Americas in Miami and Santiago. By my leading two trade missions to Latin America in 1995 and 1998. By our hosting the OAS General Assembly in Windsor last June. By the meetings of hemispheric ministers of finance, environment and labour that will take place in Canada in the coming months. And by the inaugural meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas in Ottawa in just a few weeks.

In a couple of months, we will take the most important step on our journey, as we welcome the democratically elected leaders of the Americas to Quebec City for the Third Summit of the Americas.

The steps we have taken on our journey have run in parallel with the growing sense that there is more to the Americas than geography. A sense that we are more than just neighbours and friends. We are "Una Gran Familia." Each a proud individual nation to be sure. Secure in our unique identity and sovereignty. But at a higher level, a family. Who share aspirations and values. Who have embraced democracy, free markets and social justice. Who have taken enhancing the quality of life of all of our people as our common cause.

Recently I have spoken to many of your leaders about how we can move ahead on an agenda of human progress and shared prosperity. I will talk to President Bush about it later today. For those listening in Washington and beyond, I would like to outline how Canada sees our agenda unfolding for the Quebec City summit.

Let me begin by acknowledging the serious problems and challenges that stand between us and our goal. But I have unshakeable confidence in our collective resolve to meet